

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 are pending. Claim 1 is the only independent claim. Claims 1 and 3 have been amended.

Claim 3 was objected to due to perceived informalities. In particular, the position was taken that it is not mentioned that the third wire is connected to the contact terminal. However, the contact terminals are recited as being in the moving unit and the third wires are recited as being arranged between the fixed unit and moving unit.

As to the objections to the terminology used with regard to the inspection signals, while the claim was believed clear, it has been reworded somewhat, without changing its scope. In particular, a measurement is made based on returned inspection signals. This is believed perfectly clear, especially when read in light of the specification, for example, at page 12, lines 9-21, although the claim is not limited to the disclosed embodiment. Withdrawal of the objection is requested.

Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over U.S. Patent 6,972,573 (Ishioka et al.) in view of JP 2001-083214 (Okawa Shinichi). Applicants submit that amended independent claim 1 is patentable over the cited references for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1 is directed to an inspection apparatus for electrical inspection of a printed board having a plurality of contacts thereon. The inspection apparatus includes: a fixed unit having a control device that controls the inspection apparatus; a moving unit having a plurality of contact terminals that are respectively brought into contact with the plurality of contacts on the printed board, the moving unit being operable to move above the surface of the printed board by operating a drive fixed

thereto; a plurality of first wires directly connected with the plurality of contact terminals in the moving unit; at least one connection switching device arranged in the moving unit and connected with the first wires, for selectively switching over the plurality of first wires in response to connection switching signals; a connection switching signal transmitter arranged inside of the fixed unit, for transmitting the connection switching signals; a connection switching signal receiver arranged inside of the moving unit, for receiving the connection switching signals; a plurality of second wires connected with the fixed unit and the moving unit for transmission of the connection switching signals from the fixed unit to the moving unit; and a plurality of third wires, the number of which is less than the number of the first wires and which is arranged between the fixed unit and the moving unit, for establishing connections between the fixed unit and a part of the first wires, which are switched over by the at least one connection switching device in response to the connection switching signals.

Claim 1 is directed to an inspection apparatus in which the moving unit (e.g. 20) having plural probes (e.g., 21) moves above the printed-circuit board and is brought into contact with the contacts of the printed-circuit board so as to sequentially perform inspection.

Ishioka et. al teaches that the probe 22 is brought into contact with the printed-circuit board 100 so as to detect signals by means of the sensor element 11 of the sensor unit 1, wherein the probe 22 can be controlled by way of switching using the selector 23. However, Ishioka et al. is not designed such that the probe 22 moves above the printed-circuit board, as recited in amended claim 1.

Okawa Shinichi teaches circuitry for performing inspection on the semiconductor integrated circuit in which, in response to the selection address signal output from the selection circuit, one of the plural measured elements 11 is selected and

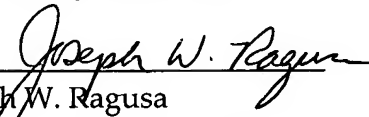
is connected to the characteristic measurement terminal 13, allowing the number of the characteristic measurement terminals 13 to be reduced. However, in Okawa Shinichi the probe does not sequentially perform measurement on the measurement points while it moves above the printed-circuit board, as in claim 1.

For at least the foregoing reasons, the cited references, taken alone or in combination, do not teach the features of amended independent claim 1, which is believed patentable thereover. The dependent claims are believed patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

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Respectfully submitted,

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